

Air Force Prime Time, a weekly news magazine for and about airmen stationed overseas, airs Thursday evenings at 8:25 p.m. Central European Time on AFN television. In this week's edition, the contingency response group is recognized, Air Force brings \$7 million worth of medical supplies to Moldova and more.



## News briefs

### Holiday hours

The following Army and Air Force Exchange Service facilities close Monday, Labor Day.

■ Spangdahlem - Commissary, military clothing, Popeyes, car care center, SIXT car rental, service mart and the flower shop.

■ Bitburg - Commissary, furniture store, service mart and the base movie theater. The Bitburg commissary also closes Tuesday.

Operating hours for other AAFES facilities are:

#### Spangdahlem

■ Filling station - 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

■ Barber/beauty shop - 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

■ Burger King - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

■ Warehouse store - 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

■ Alterations - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Main exchange, book store and new car sales - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Anthony's Pizza - 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

#### Bitburg

■ Filling station - 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

■ Car care center - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Barber/beauty shop - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Burger King Express - 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Main exchange and new car sales - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Shopette and Box Office Video - 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

■ Optical shop, Willi Geck and Unique Gifts - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Anthony's Pizza - Noon to 6 p.m.

### Additional shopping hour

The Spangdahlem Commissary opens one hour earlier starting today. New opening hours are 9 a.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. Saturday.

### Heat outage

Buildings 1, 2, 3, 47, 48, 49, 50, 84 and the high school on Bitburg will not have hot water 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday due to the hookup of a heating line.

### Baggage allowance

Official passengers are authorized two pieces of checked baggage weighing less than 70 pounds each and one carry-on when traveling on Air Mobility Command aircraft. Passengers traveling with un-authorized excess baggage are respon-sible to pay excess baggage charges.

Passengers in TDY status who are required to travel with excess checked baggage should ensure excess baggage is authorized in the travel order. Call passenger travel at 452-6661 for details.

# Eifel Times

Vol. 34, Issue 32

Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

Sept. 1, 2000



Iris Reiff

### Southwest Asia bound

(Above) 52nd Logistics Group members load crates of supplies for the Air Expeditionary Force-9 deployment to Southwest Asia Monday. (Right) Members of the 606th Air Control Squadron sign-up for flight meals Aug. 25 before processing for the AEF-9 deployment. More than 600 wing members, including the 22nd and 81st Fighter Squadrons, deploy for SWA between Aug. 27 and Sunday.



Staff Sgt. Laura Sparks

## First sergeant rewarded for civil courage

By Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey  
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Local police and town officials honored the 22nd Fighter Squadron first sergeant for helping a severely wounded man early in the morning July 21.

Master Sgt. Michael Kirsch received a certificate for civil courage and other tokens of appreciation during a ceremony Aug. 15 in the Speicher Rathaus.

Recalling the events as they took place that July morning, Kirsch said at about 5 a.m. he and his wife were awakened by loud yelling from outside their home. Looking through the bedroom window, he saw a man running from two other men.

"The man running was wearing a white sweatshirt, but his arm was completely red," Kirsch said.

Realizing the urgency of the situation, Kirsch ran outside to help the severely bleeding man.

"Blood was all over the street and the man kept walking away from me," Kirsch said. "He soon became weak and started to fall over. That's when I could check the wound."

Using the emergency care skills learned from years in the

military and as a lifeguard in the past, Kirsch tried to stop the bleeding, but found it wasn't going to be easy.

"The man's arm was cut to the bone from shoulder to elbow; like it was filleted," Kirsch said. "I kept trying to slow the bleeding by using bandages and pressure, but the blood just soaked through in no time and I quickly realized the man needed (professional) help."

To complicate matters, while trying to stop the blood loss, one of the man's attackers returned with a knife, attempting to conceal it in his hand. Kirsch, still mostly concerned with helping the victim, went into his house and retrieved a baseball bat to thwart the attacker. The attacker dropped his knife after Kirsch threatened him with the bat. Kirsch then went back to helping the wounded victim.

"I didn't want to hit the other guy, but I wanted him to leave us alone . . . until medical help could get there," Kirsch said. "It wasn't long, though, before the attacker came back again, this time to get his knife back. He was really starting to get on my nerves."

See Green Flag, Page 2

## 'Ecstasy' use investigated at Spangdahlem

By Capt. Glen Roberts  
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

There's a new force-protection threat in town, and this one is dangerous not only to people's health, but to their careers as well.

The threat, according to wing officials, is "Ecstasy," the newly-popular "Rave" drug which has seen more than a 500 percent increase in usage in the past four years.

The Air Force Office of Special Investigations is currently investi-gating

more than 20 alleged uses and sales of the drug on Spangdahlem, according to Special Agent Todd Langenfeld.

"This threat is real, and I consider it a force-protection issue," said Brig. Gen. Don Hoffman, 52nd Fighter Wing commander. "This drug poses a direct threat to the health and well-being of our troops just as any combat situation or terrorist act would. We as an Air Force must have zero tolerance for it."

Indeed, Air Force investigative statistics reflect the concerns voiced by

the general. Primarily produced in the Netherlands and Belgium, Ecstasy, also known on the street as "E," "Disco Biscuits," "Dennis the Menace" or "XTC," has now replaced cocaine as the second most frequently identified drug in Air Force investigations.

In 1999, AFOSI conducted 66 drug investigations throughout the Air Force which involved the drug. As of June 2000, AFOSI had conducted more than 110 Ecstasy cases, accounting for 24

See Ecstasy, Page 2

## Kirsch

Continued from Page 1

After Kirsch forcibly pushed the assailant away another few times, the attacker left.

"The whole thing felt so surreal," Kirsch said. "I never thought I was in harm. I just felt the need to help the hurt man. I don't believe anyone should put themselves in harm's way, but I do think people should help if they can."

A Polizei investigation determined the victim was an illegal immigrant who initiated the fight with the other two men. With the help of a detailed statement by Kirsch, the local police were able to conduct a successful investigation. The wounded man spent three days in the hospital and was charged for starting the fight and illegal immigration, according to Peter Thiel, Bitburg Police Department chief.

Kirsch's award for civil courage ties directly to a German "Good Samaritan" law which essentially states a person who doesn't take



Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey  
**Walter Ludwig, Wittlich Police Department chief, reads the award citation for civil courage presented to Master Sgt. Michael Ellis, 22nd Fighter Squadron first sergeant, Aug. 15 in Speicher.**

action to stop a crime contributes to it.

"Looking away from crime can result in being charged as an accessory; therefore, (Kirsch's) actions were not only in keeping with the law, but also the right thing to do," said Norbert Schoeder, Speicher mayor during the certificate presentation.

"This is a fabulous example of being a good neighbor and a good American within the German community," said Chief Master Sgt. Audrey Thompson, 52nd Fighter Wing command chief master sergeant.

"I just did what I would expect anyone else to do in the same situation," Kirsch said.

## Kuwait HH-60 accident investigation concludes

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** — Pilot error caused an Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter to make a hard landing and roll over in Kuwait Dec. 15, 1999, according to an accident investigation board report released Aug. 28.

The HH-60, assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, Al Jaber Air Base, was the second aircraft of a two-ship formation and was on approach to a desert-landing zone when it made a hard landing and rolled over on its side. The pilot, Capt. Paul Anderson; the co-pilot, 1st Lt. Junaid Rahman; the flight engineer, Tech. Sgt. Mark Hodges; and the gunner, Staff Sgt. David Rogers sustained only minor injuries. All crewmembers are assigned to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Anderson failed to execute an approach to landing during night tactical training. The report states the pilot allowed the helicopter's airspeed to drop too low, resulting in an excessive sink rate. Between 50 and 75 feet above the ground, the helicopter began a nearly vertical descent, landed hard and rolled over. All four crewmembers safely egressed the aircraft following the crash.

The two aircraft were flying a mission that included day water operations, night tactical operations and night water operations.

## Ecstasy

Continued from Page 1

percent of total drug cases in the Air Force. That trend, if held steady throughout the year, would be a staggering 300 percent increase in just 12 months.

Officials cite several reasons for the widespread use of the drug, officially known as Methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or simply MDMA. The first is the misperception that the drug, usually taken in pill form and sold for around \$10, isn't dangerous.

Not so, according to regulators from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In fact, MDMA has absolutely no medical use or value in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world, regulators said.

"When people ask me about the dangers of drugs, Ecstasy is really No. 1 on my list, because it is one of the very few drugs that I know about that genuinely does brain damage," Duke University pharmacology Professor Wilkie Wilson told CBS news in May.

Wilson, the author of a respected book on drug use, said that MDMA works by causing the brain to release a large amount of serotonin, a key chemical and neurotransmitter. Lack of serotonin can harm areas of the brain responsible for thought and memory, he said.

"When the drug effect wears off, you have a brain that has spilled a lot of serotonin, and now it doesn't have enough to release the next time you need it," Wilson said.

Probably the biggest danger from the drug, though, is overheating, which can lead to epilepsy-like seizures, a coma or death, he said.

MDMA-related fatalities at all-night rave parties have also been reported, with Florida leading all states with 40 Ecstasy-related deaths in 1999. The stimulant effects of the drug, which enable the user to dance for extended periods,

**"Our dogs are perfectly able to pick up the scent of most any drug, including methamphetamine-based drugs . . . Let me put it this way — I wouldn't want to be the guy who tries to get past these dogs with any drug."**

Tech. Sgt. Michael Ellis  
52nd Security Forces Squadron kennel master

combined with crowded conditions usually found at raves can lead to dehydration and heart or kidney failure.

Another reason for its rising popularity in the military is the misperception that the drug isn't detectable through urinalysis or other conventional means.

According to Major Stephen Gregoire of the Air Force Demand Reduction Office, which manages Air Force urine testing for the Air Force Surgeon General, specimens are tested for several substances, including cocaine, barbiturates, amphetamine, MDMA and THC, the main toxicant found in Marijuana smoke. In 1999, the lab detected and confirmed more than a dozen positives for MDMA. As of June 2000, the lab had confirmed more than 50 positive detections, quadruple the number from the previous year. And that's only in the first six months, Gregoire said.

Some people mistakenly believe that the drug cannot be found by specially trained military or civilian "drug" dogs, trained to sniff out narcotics and illegal substances. That's also false, said AFOSI.

"Our dogs are perfectly able to pick up the scent of any amphetamine-based drug," said Tech Sgt. Michael Ellis, 52nd Security Forces Squadron kennel master. "Let me put

it this way - I wouldn't want to be the guy who tries to get on base with any drug."

Aside from the health hazards posed by the drug, it can also be extremely hazardous to your career, said Lt. Col. Steve Blewett, Judge Advocate General for the 52nd Fighter Wing.

"It's very simple - the use of any illegal substance is inconsistent with military service - period," said Blewett. "You don't need to look far to find some examples of ruined careers from people using drugs."

For instance, 17 airmen were implicated at RAF Mildenhall, England, last year for the use of Ecstasy, and several other high-profile cases were prosecuted at Yokota Air Base, Japan; Hickam AB, Hawaii; and Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. Most resulted in at least bad-conduct discharges and time in prison, depending on the severity of each case.

Echoing those comments were the wing commander, who stressed the importance of maintaining a drug-free environment for every person connected to Team Eifel.

"We can't afford to have drug use on our base," Hoffman said. "It's bad for the health of everyone - active-duty, civilian and family members alike. And it can devastate a career."

Another area the general particularly stressed was the safety of our children.

"Parents need to be active with their children and explain to them the dangers of drug use," Hoffman said. "Now that school is back in session, children will have a little less direct contact with their parents each day, so it's especially important to teach them to say 'No!'"

"The bottom line is that drug use is bad for our people, our mission and our Air Force - and it won't be tolerated."

# USAFE continues anthrax education program

**Airman training still required to be completed despite dwindling certified vaccine stockpiles**

**RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany** — U.S. Air Forces in Europe is well into the second phase of a three-phase program designed to educate all airmen on the anthrax vaccine immunization program by Nov. 1.

The training efforts are not hampered by the Department of Defense's decision in July to slow down the immunization program because of a short supply of FDA-approved vaccine.

Even though the vaccine side of the program has slowed, the Air Force is still required to train its people by Nov. 1 under a mandate from Gen. Michael Ryan, Air Force chief of staff.

The training covers the threat of anthrax as a weapon, the organism and the disease, the vaccine, and the immunization program procedures.

In July, USAFE brought together teams of people from each of its bases to learn about the vaccination program. These teams are composed of experts from the medical, intelligence, operations, legal and public affairs fields. The teams are training unit

commanders, first sergeants and command chief master sergeants at each base, which is the second phase.

"This is the critical part of the education program, because the commanders are the ones who shoulder responsibility for ensuring their people are educated," said Lt. Col. Ken Hall, USAFE public health officer and director of the command's anthrax program. "These are the folks who can help people work through their concerns early on."

Commanders must ensure all Air Force people are trained on the program, which includes watching a Department of Defense training videotape, receiving printed informational materials, and having access to experts to discuss their concerns on the immunization program.

Gen. Gregory Martin, USAFE commander, has had five shots of the six-shot regimen, which is taken over 18 months. He said the only side effect he had was a sore arm after the first shot.

"The threat is real," he said recently. "Anthrax, if contracted by an unprotected

person, is lethal."

Which is why the DOD decided in 1997 to immunize military members. But a short supply of FDA-approved vaccine this year has forced the Pentagon to slow down immunizations. The sole contractor, Biopart of Lansing, Mich., has had difficulty gaining Food and Drug Administration approval for its production facility.

"When we began this program, we had a stockpile of vaccine," Secretary of Defense William Cohen said when announcing the slow down July 10. "The one facility that produced the vaccine has since been taken over and replaced by a new company which has yet to receive FDA approval to begin operations at a new facility. During this time, we have been conducting vaccinations from our original stockpile. Unfortunately, we're beginning to run low on tested and certified doses from that stockpile, forcing us to temporarily slow our vaccination efforts."

What's left of the vaccine is being largely reserved for the 10,000 military people "with boots on the ground" in Southwest Asia and 37,000 in South Korea, said Dr. J. Jarrett Clinton, first assistant to the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, in a DOD Press Service story July 12.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Randy L. West, senior adviser to the deputy secretary of defense for chemical and biological protection said immunizations will resume at full speed when the FDA approves and certifies a sufficient supply of vaccine as safe and effective. He emphasized Biopart's own timetable doesn't call for its new vaccine to be available before the end of the year.

Since 1998, when the immunization program started, more than 460,000 people have started vaccinations and have received a total of more than 1.8 million shots. About 57,000 have received all six shots. Of those, 351 people have refused to take the shot and have received disciplinary action or were discharged or released from service, West reported.

There have been 848 Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System forms reviewed as of last month. West said 163 people have missed a day of work presumably because of adverse reaction to the shots and 38 have been hospitalized and subsequently released.

For more details on the anthrax program, go to [www.anthrax.osd.mil](http://www.anthrax.osd.mil) or [www.usafe.af.mil](http://www.usafe.af.mil). (USAFE News Service)

## Fellowship program opens White House to its citizens

**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas** — Air Force members wanting to learn first-hand how our nation's government works can do so if they're selected to participate in the White House Fellowship program.

All U.S. citizens, with the exception of federally employed civilians, can apply for this program.

There are no restrictions on age, sex or race, and no physical requirements in order to apply. Annually, 11 to 19 people work full-time for one year as special assistants to senior executives in cabinet-level agencies or in the executive office of the president.

Active-duty members are encouraged to apply and can do so by requesting an application from the President's Commission on White House Fellows, 712 Jackson Place NW, Washington DC 20503 or by calling (202) 395-4522. Applications must be returned to the commission, postmarked by Feb. 1. The President's commission also has a Web site for more information about the program.

Completed applications are forwarded directly to the commission and do not need to be forwarded through the Air Force Personnel Center.

Candidates are judged on the basis of professional, academic, athletic, artistic and other accomplishments, and on their demonstrated interest in public service.

The president will make the final selections in June. Those selected will serve their tours from Sept. 1, 2001 to Aug. 31, 2002.

Call the local military personnel flight at 452-6553 for eligibility criteria. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)



Staff Sgt. Laura Sparks

### All washed up

The 52nd Component Repair Squadron's new hush house in building 221 underwent an acceptance test on its fire containment system Aug. 23. The test involves completely filling the facility with foam in about six to seven minutes. The new building brings the total number of hush houses on base to three. It will be used for aircraft engine testing and troubleshooting the 22nd and 23rd Fighter Squadron's F-16s.



# Travel card now mandatory for airline ticket purchases

**RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany** — U.S. Air Forces in Europe members on temporary duty must now use their government travel card to buy airline tickets for most trips.

The new USAFE policy took effect Aug. 1 in line with the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 mandate that the travel card be used for major TDY-related costs.

Since May 1, travelers have been required to use the travel card to pay for lodging and rental car expenses. Before the policy change, travelers could use the payment method of choice for these expenses, but airline tickets were paid with government transportation requests.

The new airline ticket purchase policy for USAFE complies with Defense Department guidance and the law. The policy shouldn't negatively impact travelers, said Capt. James Lee, command pay and entitlements chief at the headquarters USAFE Financial Management and Comptroller directorate.

"We recognize there are some

occasions for which the use of the travel card won't work or isn't practical," he said.

USAFE is in the process of establishing centrally billed accounts that will be used for travel expenses for permanent change of station moves, deployments, emergency leave travel and consecutive overseas tour leave travel. In addition, unit commanders can authorize the use of a centrally billed account for TDY travelers on a case-by-case basis, Lee added.

USAFE finance officials offer the following tips to help travelers meet the new policy:

- Pick up airline tickets no earlier than three workdays before leaving to avoid early billing.

- Always buy tickets through the Scheduled Airline Ticket Office, even if government travel is not directed, to avoid potential problems with reimbursement.

- If you can't pick up your own ticket, authorize someone else to do so by completing a form available at SATO.

- If you're authorized to buy a non-refundable or restricted fare ticket, request approval to use the centrally billed account to avoid having to request reimbursement in the event the TDY is cancelled.

- If you travel frequently, particularly to the United States or a high-cost area, ask your unit travel card representative to increase the charge limit on your card.

- For a TDY of more than 45 days, set up accrual payments at the finance office before you leave and have the funds sent directly to the Bank of America, the travel card company, to avoid overdue bills.

- To avoid late payments or delays, file your travel voucher promptly after you return and use the "split disbursement" option to electronically send your payment directly to the Bank of America.

Call the base finance office at 452-6763 for more information on the new policy or on using the split disbursement. (USAFE News Service)

## Weapons loaders lock, load 'real thing'

**By 1st Lt. Angela Johnson**  
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev.** — It takes three people 25-30 minutes from start to finish to load live bombs onto an F-16. It takes a pilot only a fraction of a second to push the "pickle" button to drop a bomb.

Spangdahlem airmen spent the second week at Green Flag loading live bombs to be dropped over the Nellis Air Force Range.

Dropping live bombs is something the 23rd Fighter Squadron does not have the opportunity to do in Germany. For many people, both pilots and support members, this was a first.

"This deployment to Green Flag has given our crews experience loading live bombs," said Staff Sgt. Jason Moenter, 23rd Fighter Squadron weapons load crew team chief. "Many of our airmen have never had actual loading experience with live bombs - up until now it was just training."

"This training will also help us prepare for our Air Expeditionary Force deployment to Saudi Arabia in

December," said Master Sgt. James Parker, 23rd FS weapons section chief. "We get to see and work with the combat load we will be flying with everyday in Saudi. We also get to experience the heat."

For many this is a first. Others have loaded live bombs in the past.

"When a pilot comes back and says that he hit a target dead on I am proud," said Moenter. "These exercises give me confidence that in a real-world situation our pilots would be able to perform as well; as was the case in Aviano. During Operation Allied Force, I had the privilege of loading quite a few jets who were able to drop and hit the target."

A typical bomb load crew is made up of three people. The first person is the team chief or one-man. The team chief is responsible for locking and pinning the bombs and the checklist. He also walks along side the bomb, which is loaded on the jammer, from the trailer to the jet.

The second person or two-man's primary responsibility is to prep the rack, where the bomb is loaded, and help the team chief load and secure the

bomb. The two-man is also responsible for wiring the bomb and ensuring the wire is cut to the correct length - making sure the bomb's timing is correct.

The third person or three-man, is responsible for driving and controlling the jammer and prepping the bombs. The jammer is a small vehicle used to move the bombs from the trailer, which they are transported on to the jets.

"Teamwork is what ensures successful loading of bombs," said Senior Airman Horace Abner, 23rd FS weapons two-man.

With the noise out on the flightline, hand signals are required, at times, to communicate between the one-man, two-man and three-man. Once the bomb is aligned, the one - and two-man work together to secure the bomb in place and the one-man locks it into place.

Safety is another concern in a career field as explosive as munitions. "If this thing drops (the MK-84), you have 45 seconds to run 4,000 feet," said Senior Airman Everett Bisquera, 23rd FS weapons three-man.



Tech. Sgt. Rich Romero

**Maria Swantek teaches 3-year-old Namia Stevenson to color in the lines in the Honeybear Room at the Spangdahlem child development center.**

## Child care fees increase Oct. 1

**By Julie Speagle**  
52nd Services Squadron marketing

The cost of child care at on-base facilities goes up beginning Oct. 1.

Parents with children enrolled at the child development centers or in the school-age program will pay from \$1-\$3 more per week, depending on their income. The focus of the fee increase is financial viability while maintaining a quality staff.

"The Air Force requires us to break even financially while meeting the high standards for accreditation," said Tom Stevens, family member program flight chief. "Parent fees are set to pay approximately half of the total cost of providing care, including the caregivers' wages and benefits. Because most of our child care staff are paid out of non-appropriated funds, that money must come from fees. The taxpayers foot the bill for the other half of operating costs in the way of appropriated funds from the Congress."

The principal justification for raising the fees is pay increases for staff members. Child care is an expensive service to purchase because it is labor intensive. The services squadron is required by the Air Force to provide cost of living raises to the caregivers, and then there is the pay adjustments as the staff member undergoes the multi-level training process mandatory for child care providers.

"The Eifel region has a tight labor market. To attract and sustain a quality staff, we must pay more to our caregivers to entice them to stay," Stevens said.

The Air Force has also dictated the services squadron examine the child care fees yearly.

"We take the fee schedule very seriously because we understand it does effect family budgets," Stevens added.

For more information, call the Eifel East CDC at 452-6697 or the Eifel West CDC at 453-7012.

# TRICARE eases pain of impatient collectors

## Health care system offers help resolving medical billing issues

WASHINGTON — TRICARE beneficiaries are now just a phone call away from accessing help to resolve creditors' concerns over late or unpaid medical care bills.

While service members, retirees and family members consider the TRICARE health care system a valued benefit, they don't like threatening calls and letters from collection agencies harassing them over unpaid medical bills.

"These problems tend to occur when physicians are impatient for payment, as they have a right to be. (However,) the burden of dealing with this system, of any system, should not fall on the individual (service member)," said Bernard D. Rostker, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, in a recent interview with the American Forces Information Service.

Service members and other TRICARE beneficiaries raised the bill-collector issue at the Military Family Forum May 31 at the Pentagon, Rostker said. He responded June 27 with a memorandum directing the services' health affairs organizations to establish the Debt Collection Assistance Officer program within 30 days.

Implemented July 26, this new program formally established DCAOs as local points of contact that service members and other eligible TRICARE beneficiaries, stateside and overseas, may use to resolve medical bill payment issues.

The new DCAO system, Rostker said, creates a formal method for beneficiaries "to gain help in dealing with what admittedly is, as is every health maintenance organization, a bureaucratic process."

He said there could be resolutions where beneficiaries owe money, "in which case we're prepared to work with him or her to find out how we can be most helpful in resolving that issue." He also noted "situations where the bill is misplaced . . . we can work with the doctor or credit organization to resolve that."

The main thing, Rostker said, "is we don't want our people to feel they've been isolated. This is a part of the system and we want to be able to help them if and when this kind of situation occurs."

He said he has received varying feedback regarding the prevalence of conflicts involving TRICARE bill payment. "I've asked some people, and one of the services (said) they thought this happens a couple of hundred times a year, and other people think it occurs a couple of hundred times a month. We 'll know better how often this occurs by how people use this service," he said.

Before the DCAO program was implemented, DoD resolved dunning letters and bad credit reports involving TRICARE payments on an ad hoc basis, Rostker said. Besides this method not working very well, it left no central registry to track the resolution of unpaid TRICARE payments, he said.

"Now, it will come to our attention because we've taken on the responsibility of being the agent for our service members in trying to resolve these situations," he said.

TRICARE beneficiaries who've received dunning letters or bad credit reports can now just phone the designated debt collection assistance officer, who will coordinate a review/research process.

DCAO Program Manager Marcia Bonifas said the beneficiary provides the assistance officer with documentation collection agency letters, bills and contractors' explanations of medical benefits. The DCAO in turn sends the information to the contractor's bill processing or collections unit, she said. The DCAO receives the completed research information and then notifies the beneficiary in writing.

Contractors will research claims less than six years old, Bonifas said, but they won't have any documentation for claims older than that. These older claims will be researched by a special TRICARE Management Activity claims evaluation office in Aurora, Colo., she said.

Although DCAOs can help beneficiaries to research and resolve TRICARE payment problems and related credit reports, they cannot provide legal advice or repair bad credit ratings, she said.

For more DCAO information, visit the Web site at [www.tricare.osd.mil/dcao/](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/dcao/). In a month or two, active-duty service members will see the phone number for their local DCAO on their leave and earnings statements, Bonifas added.

For more information about TRICARE, visit the Military Health System/TRICARE Web site at [www.tricare.osd.mil/](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/). (American Forces Press Service)

## Updating pay information easier using online self-service system

WASHINGTON — Air Force civilian employees can receive their Leave and Earning Statements online via the Employee/Member Self Service system beginning Sept. 18.

Civilian employees were issued temporary Personal Identification Numbers in March, when the Defense Finance and Accounting Service debuted the E/MSS system. Originally, they had until the end of July to customize their PIN. To date, only 20 percent of the 162,130 Air Force civilian employees have customized their PINs. DFAS has extended that deadline through the end of August.

The E/MSS is an Internet and telephone system allowing Defense Department members to update pay information without visiting a finance office. Active-duty members are scheduled to have service access in October.

Those who have lost their temporary PIN or have not received one can call the E/MSS hot line at (800) 390-2348. E/MSS can also be accessed by touch-tone telephone at (800) DOD-EMSS or (912) 757-3119.

Those who take advantage of the E-LES system will be able to view their statements earlier, and they will be able review the last three pay periods online, according to Robert F. Hale, Air Force assistant secretary for financial management. By logging onto the Web site or using a touch-tone telephone, E/MSS lets employees update federal tax withholding information, adjust allotments, change addresses and conduct net pay electronic fund transfers. Along with E-LES, other future services include changing state tax status and exemptions and updating savings bond information. (Air Force Print News)



Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey

### Perfect fit

Capt. Mary Brookins, 52nd Medical Group community home health nurse manager, adjusts Brad Pinkley's helmet Tuesday at Bitburg during the 52nd MDG Bicycle Helmet Fit Check. Although Pinkley's helmet is the right size, his ear and chin straps needed adjusting so it won't come off in an accident. The most common problem concerning helmets is that they are too big, said Capt. Tammy Karamarinov, 52nd MDG pharmacist and fit check volunteer. One way to tell if a helmet is too big, put your fingers around the bottom edges of the helmet, if there is too much room on either side or the front, the helmet doesn't fit properly. Try a smaller one for a better fit, according to the Snell Safety Education Center, Inc.



## Community Mailbox

### Family support center news

All of the following classes and seminars take place in the family support center on Bitburg unless otherwise indicated. Call 453-7491 for details.

■ A spouses' orientation takes place 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sept. 8.

■ A Transition Assistance Program seminar takes place 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 12-15.

■ The relocation assistance program Trier trip takes place Sept. 22.

■ A six week course on German language and culture begins 6-8 p.m. Sept. 26.

■ An interview skills workshop takes place 1-3 p.m. Sept. 26.

### OCSC meeting

The Officers' and Civilians' Spouses' Club meets at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Spangdahlem Community Center. Call Darci Jeffers at 06575-903422 for details.

### Volksmarch

Eifel Wanderers Volkmarcing Club meets at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Zum Stein Gasthaus in Metterich. New members welcome. Visit [www.welcome.to/eifelwanderers](http://www.welcome.to/eifelwanderers) for more information.

### German-American Club

The German-American Club meets at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Zagreb Restaurant in Bitburg. Call Lisa Skinner at 453-8395 for event details or Tim Jachowski at 452-7415 about club membership.

### Education center news

■ Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University closes Sept. 8-18 for an official function; therefore, people should register for classes by Sept. 8.

■ Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University offers a powerplant theory and applications course for people deploying to Southeast Asia. Classes start Sept. 9. Tuition is free for those deploying for more than 30 days. Call 452-7553 for details.

■ Walk-in education counseling services are available



Airman 1st Class Michelle Roquid

### Curly coaches

Harlem Globetrotter team member Curly Neal teaches Lorrie Hoskins one of his free-throw techniques Sunday in the base fitness center. Neal has played more than 6,000 games in 97 countries. His visit to Spangdahlem was part of the 52nd Services Squadron Extreme Summer program.

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday in building 192. Call the center at 452-6063 for details.

### Membership drive

The Spangdahlem Spouses and Enlisted Members Club membership dinner meeting takes place at 6 p.m. Sept. 13 in the Bitburg Elementary School cafeteria. Call Barbara Best at 06565-956887 for more information about the club and to make reservations.

### Golf tournament

The Eifel Mountain Open takes place Sept. 16. Cost is \$15 plus green fees. Call 452-6821 for details.

### Bowling

League registration takes place 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 18

at Eifel Lanes, building 300. Call 453-6032 or 452-6217 for details.

### YES program

High-school students can earn up to \$4 per hour for future college expenses by volunteering with Youth Employment Services Program. Call youth programs at 452-7546 for details.

### Swim team

The Eifel Sharks need competition swim team coaches for the upcoming swim season. Call 452-8299 or 06565-958299 for details.

### Coaches needed

The Eifel youth sports program needs coaches and officials for the soccer and flag football season. Sign-up 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in building 58 on Bitburg or at the base community center. Call youth sports at 453-6267 for details.

### Cub Scouts

Pack 161 seeks volunteers for secretarial, registrar and fund-raising positions. Call Bernadette Young at 06561-670473 for details.

### Substitutes wanted

Spangdahlem Elementary School is accepting applications for substitute teachers. Call 452-6881 for more information.

### Nurses needed

Family Advocacy needs volunteer nurses to help with the New Parent Support Program. Call 452-8279 or 453-3129 for details.

### Home schooling

Eifel Home Schoolers offers information and support. Call Kimberly Carpenter at 06565-942675.

### Mothers of Preschoolers

MOPS needs volunteers to work in their children's rooms during the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. To volunteer, call Christina Gay at 06565-944453.



## Movies

All movies play at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

### Bitburg Castle

Today

#### Pokemon 2000 (G)

A terrible force throws the Pokemon universe horribly out of balance, threatening all life on Earth. The only one who stands a chance of stopping it is young trainer Ash. He sets out to prove that one person can make all the difference when he embarks on the adventure to save the world. Animated

Saturday

#### Dinosaur (PG)

Set 65 million years ago during the late Cretaceous Period, an Iguanodon named Aladar, is separated from his own species and raised on an island paradise by a clan of lemurs. When a devastating meteor shower plunges their world into chaos, Aladar and several members of his family escape and join a group of dinosaurs searching for a safe new nesting ground. Intense images.

Sunday

#### Dinosaur

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Wednesday

#### Pokemon 2000

Thursday

#### Dinosaur

### Spangdahlem Skyline

Today

#### Nutty Professor II (PG-13)

Sherman thought he has seen the last of his chaotic alter-ego, but Buddy Love is back. Sherman battles to restore order to his family, and marry the woman he loves. Crude humor and sexual material.

Saturday

#### Titan A.E. (PG) (4 p.m.)

A thousand years from now, Earth is destroyed by an attacking race of aliens known as the Drej. Cale, a human teen-ager, has a map given to him by his father which will lead him to the Titan, a starship which contains the last survivors of the planet, and can lead him to a new Earth. However, the Drej want Cale dead. Action violence, sensuality and language.

#### Nutty Professor II (7 p.m.)

Sunday

#### Nutty Professor II

Monday

#### Big Momma's House (PG-13)

When an undercover cop is sent to Georgia to protect a single mother and her son, he adopts the identity of a crass, heavy-set Southern grandmother known as "Big Momma".

Tuesday

#### Big Momma's House

Closed Wednesday and Thursday

Times and movies are subject to change.  
For the most current information,  
call 453-7541.

# Bernkastel celebrates the grape

By Iris Reiff

52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Bernkastel celebrates its traditional wine festival of the middle Mosel today through Tuesday.

About 26 wine growing towns participate in the fest, the largest of its kind along the Mosel.

Visitors to Bernkastel, the center of the Mosel wine industry, can experience the delicious Riesling wines at one of the town's old wine-cellar or enjoy the Mosel hospitality and entertainment offered in hotels, cozy wine taverns, first-class restaurants or traditional coffee houses.

The adventurous can follow a cobblestone path behind the statue in the square, through vineyards, traveling endlessly uphill. Take your time, snap lots of pictures and take a break to enjoy one of the most beautiful panoramas of the Mosel, with the largest continuously-linked vineyard slopes in Germany.

Today's activities feature a concert by the Dixielanders Jazz band from Great Britain between 2:245 p.m. The amusement park, set up along the Mosel shore, opens to the public at 3:30 p.m. Choir performances are scheduled from 4:545 p.m. to take place in the market square and along the wine street. The wine queen "Mosella 94" will be welcomed from 6-7 p.m. in the market square with music and entertainment.

A baroque concert takes place at the St. Brikitus Church in Kues. Entry to this event is 20 DM per person. The Deputies of Hearts Band will perform along the wine



Iris Reiff

**The Bernkastel Wine Festival "king" and his helpers parade through town streets during the celebration. The festival starts with a jazz concert at 2 p.m. today.**

street from 9-10 p.m. with the Harmonie St. Joseph musicians taking over from 10-11 p.m.

Several European bands will perform in well-known town spots throughout the day Saturday starting at 11 a.m.

The highlight of the middle Mosel wine festival will be a giant fireworks display from the Burg Landshut Castle and the Mosel shore from 9-9:30 p.m., known as the biggest

pyrotechnical spectacle on the Mosel. Built during the 13th century, the castle ruins lie atop a vine-clad hillside.

More music by European groups, wine tasting and fun is scheduled for Sunday. Performances will start at the town's Moselland hall, and continue all day throughout town.

Another highlight of the Bernkastel fest is a colorful folk parade at 2 p.m., featuring nearly to 90 floats, fanfares and bands parading through the city. This a good opportunity for photographers. Another highlight Sunday will be a concert by the USAFE Galaxy Band from 6-7:30 p. in the market square. Music and dancing will continue throughout the evening in the market square.

Activities Monday feature more music and fun throughout the day.

The 45-minute drive from Spangdahlem to Bernkastel along the Mosel River is a scenic route which takes travelers through valleys and around hills.

With its medieval architecture, Bernkastel-Kues is a favorite holiday site for Mosel travelers and wine connoisseurs. It will be crowded during the weekend so get there early to find convenient parking. It is not advised to bring small children.

The Information Tickets and Tours office at the community activities center is offering a tour to the Bernkastel wine festival Saturday. Call the center at 452-6207 for more information. Cost is \$20 for adults and \$15 for children, age 3-12. Departure time is 2:30 p.m. for Bitburg and 3 p.m. for Spangdahlem.



## Out and about



■Binsfeld celebrates its 1,156th anniversary today through Monday with a festival including concerts, exhibitions, dances, workshops, handcraft sales, a soccer tournament and more. The village invites Americans to take part in the festivities. Traditional foods are available for a fee including coffee, potato cakes, deer goulash, smoked fish and freshly pressed apple cider. A concert by the U.S. Forces in Europe Galaxy Band takes place Saturday at 8 p.m. The schedule for Sunday includes a parish 150 Year Anniversary Celebratory Mass at the Binsfeld church. A morning social takes place Sunday at 9 a.m. and the Washington D.C.-based Air Force Honor Guard performs between noon and 7 p.m. Dancing begins at 7 p.m.

in the festival tent. Festivities continue throughout the evening, Monday with dancing.

■Enjoy the 40th Saarburg wine festival featuring music today through Monday.

■Visit a flea market Sunday in front of the Kroeve Weinbrunnen hall, inside and outside the Bitburg festival hall; in front of the Schweich Neukauf store; in front of the Trier-Pallien Fach-hochschule located on B-51; on Trier-West Hornstrasse and in front of the Wittlich Extra market.

■Get a head start on your Christmas shopping by joining the AFEW Eifel Friends on a crystal shopping trip to Neustadt and Karlsbad, Sept. 16. Cost is \$80 for a double seat. Contact Adrienne D. Williams for details at 452-

6487 or 6696 or 0172-682-2284.

■Enjoy a vehicle-free bicycling event Sunday in the Pruemtal area when the roads between Olzheim and Waxweiler will belong to bicyclers, inline skaters and marchers only, between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

■Plan to attend the Trier Moselland exhibition Sept. 30 through Oct. 8 at the Trier Messepark. For more information, call 0651-147230.

■Attend the Magic of the Dance show Oct. 14 in the Bitburg Edith Stein School. More information on this event will appear in a future edition of the Eifel Times. For tickets, which are limited, call 06727-952333.

■Smaller wine festivals take place this weekend in the

Mosel towns of Trarbach, Reil, Beilstein, Klotten, Briedel, Bremm, Mehning and Oberfeld.

■Compositions by Bach can be heard Sept. 10 at 5 p.m. in the Cusanusstift chapel of Bernkastel-Kues. The concert will be performed by Joerg Becker on cembalo. Entry is 18 DM per person.

■A concert by the Rheinische Phil-harmonie State Orchester from Koblenz takes place Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Bitburg Roman Villa Otrang, located near the community of Fliessem. Additional events will take place at the 'Villa' in conjunction with a Sunday Adventure Day.

■Reserve your ticket now for the Rock am See open-air festival today and Saturday in

Losheim, located in the state of Saarland. The concert features numerous popular bands. Tickets are available at the Popp Ticket Service at 0651-970550.

■An exhibition feat-uring e-mail, textiles and ceramics takes place Sept. 9-15 at the "Alte Muehle" of the Himmerod Abbey. The art display will be open Tuesday through Saturday, from 2-6 p.m. and Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■The Bad Duerkheim Sausage and Wine Festival takes place Sept. 8-12 and Sept. 15-18.

■Celebrate the Wittlich October festival Oct. 19 through Nov. 12 at a festival tent near the Bungert department store, located near Indust-riegebiet 3.